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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the current circumstances surrounding the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and its location and functioning of power in the accrediting process. Strengths and weaknesses of NCATE are listed and discussed, as are positive and negative effects the association has had on teacher education. Changes are suggested for improving and strengthening the association and its power in the teacher education field. It is noted that NCATE's power base is weak; although the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) is a major force within NCATE, AACTE does not required NCATE accreditation for its member institutions. Little is said by NCATE accredited institutions about requiring graduation from NCATE accredited undergraduate programs as an admission prerequisite to graduate programs. It is concluded that NCATE will not fulfill its mission unless its external power, and the power struggle internal to NCATE, is understood and harnessed. References are included. (CB)

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THE CHALLENGE OF NCATE

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Introduction

Perhaps the most important contribution this manuscript (presentation/paper) can make to teacher education is that it not add to the confusion and controversy already surrounding the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Nearly seventy journal articles, papers, reports, news releases and the like were studied for the preparation of this paper. The authors/presenters came away from their search with one overwhelming impression--that much has been written and said about NCATE by many well-informed, well-intended individuals. To add over-looked information to the controversy would be a difficult, if not impossible, task. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made here to summarize the history and the present circumstances in which NCATE finds itself and, hopefully, to provide a few modest insights that may help those attempting to address the complex issues surrounding NCATE and the accreditation of programs designed for the preparation of teachers and other school personnel. As W. E. Gardner and Palmer (1982) have written "[T]here is a strong likelihood that national accreditation in some form will persist into the short-range future at the very least" (p. 12). Yet as Tom (1980) has said, "Ultimately, we must ask ourselves whether NCATE program accreditation is really worth all the time, effort, and confusion it entails. This question is fundamental, and the answer is unclear" (p. 116). For, as Moore (1982) has stated in discussing the

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relationship of NCATE to teacher preparation programs, "The fear of an external threat to the autonomy of institutions of higher education has been a concern since their beginnings" (p. 28).

NCATE in Perspective

In order to appreciate NCATE's function, it is necessary to understand what is meant by "accreditation." Although often related to (and sometimes confused with) the licensure of individuals (which is a state function), accreditation is, according to William K. Sheldon, chair of the National Commission on Accreditation, "the process whereby an organization or agency recognizes a college or university or a program of study as having met certain pre-determined qualifications or standards" (cited in Newman, 1976).

NCATE presently accredits about 550 institutions (programs), or about forty percent of the approximately 1,300 colleges and universities preparing teachers. About eighty percent of all the teachers in the country have been graduated from NCATE accredited programs. NCATE is the only nationally accrediting body for teacher education and related programs recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). COPA is the national association that recognizes accrediting bodies. It recognizes thirteen regional associations that accredit colleges and universities as institutions of higher education and approximately forty

professional accrediting organizations, including those for the programs that prepare lawyers and physicians.

The history of accreditation in the United States, including that of NCATE, probably began in the 1880s when various colleges and universities banded together to establish minimum admission and graduation requirements. In 1910, the medical profession set forth standards for the education of physicians and surgeons (Stedman, 1980). By 1940, there were three hundred bodies in the United States accrediting a host of different types of programs. After World War II, the federal government needed a mechanism by which to recognize those institutions that were eligible to receive funds for the education of returning veterans on the GI Bill. Thus, the National Commission on Accreditation was established in 1949. In 1965, the United States Office of Education developed a list of institutions eligible to receive federal grants of various types (Moore, 1982). In 1975, the previously mentioned COPA was formed through the union of a number of already established bodies (Stedman, 1980).

In teacher education, the American Association of Teachers Colleges (AATC) began in 1927 to advertise its members as accredited; and from 1927 to 1954 it and its successor, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), established accreditation standards and procedures (Christensen, 1980). In 1954, the National Commission on Accrediting (NCA) refused to recognize AACTE,

and later NCATE, as the accrediting body for teacher education. At this time, it was decided that membership organizations were no longer allowed to serve as accrediting agencies (Stiles, undated). Also, NCATE had only six representatives from higher education out of a total of twenty-one members on its governing body, and had too much representation from state legal agencies (Christensen, 1985). However, after much discussion, NCATE became nationally recognized as the accrediting body for teacher education in 1954 through the combined efforts of AACTE, the National Education Association (NEA), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) (Christensen, 1985).

In 1963, The University of Wisconsin's School of Education:

> [R]efused to comply with NCATE's prescription and withdrew its application for accreditation. NCATE responded by generating nationwide pressures in the education establishment against The University of Wisconsin. The ensuing controversy exposed the restricted image that NCATE had of teacher education, its lack of due process accountability to any professional group, and the power tactics it was willing to employ to enforce "voluntary" accrediting. As a consequence, the National Commission on Accrediting refused to give NCATE its full approval until it had developed new standards and modified its procedures (Stiles, undated, p. 6).

Since then, NCATE has almost continuously changed its standards, revised its procedures, and restructured its governance in order to strengthen itself and to accommodate

more fully the concerns of practitioners and learned societies and professional associations (Christensen, 1985). Efforts at redesigning NCATE to this end are continuing to the present.

NCATE's Strengths and Weaknesses

NCATE is credited with making many positive contributions to teacher education (Bender, Griswold & Simpson, 1985; Christensen, 1980; Scannell, 1983; Stiles, undated; Watts, 1983). No attempt is made here to list them all or to defend their validity. Nevertheless, among the possible positive effects attributed to NCATE are the following:

--Its existence is important to making teaching a profession since one of the functions of a profession is to ensure that the programs preparing its members meet certain standards.
--Provides a national perspective and norms.
--Raises the prestige and visibility of member institutions.
--Allows for the transfer of credits among institutions and the reciprocity of certification among states.
--Helps in student recruitment.
--Assists in the placement and marketability of graduates by providing information for prospective employees.
--Strengthens the qualifications of graduates.
--Encourages self-study that enhances program development and unifies faculty.
--Protects the student-consumer and the public.
--Disseminates information about standards that constitute high quality programs and encourages increased standards.
--Ensures proper governance, faculty, admission standards, curriculum, resources, and facilities.
--Increases the quality of K-12 schooling.
--Guides states in their program-approval efforts.
--Identifies programs eligible for federal funds.

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In spite of the many positive contributions attributed to NCATE, concerns about NCATE are also expressed (Denemark, 1985; Gardner, W.E., & Palmer, 1982; Hermanowicz, 1978; Howsam, Corrigan, Denemark, & Nash, 1976; Krathwohl, 1978; Larson, 1979; Lilly, 1983; Moore, 1982; Scannell, 1983; Stiles, undated; Tom, 1980, 1983; Watts, 1983; Whooley, 1981). Again without attempting to list them all, examining their validity, or listing them in priority order, among the concerns expressed are the following:

--The goals of national accreditation are vague.
--Institutions belonging to accrediting bodies "look at themselves and approve."
--Accreditation does not differentiate between strong and weak institutions.
--NCATE duplicates the function of state education agencies.
--NCATE accreditation is not coordinated with regional accreditation.
--The process is too complex.
--Accreditation has not reduced the number of institutions with teacher education programs.
--There is undue stress on regulatory functions rather than stimulation for improvement of programs.
--Accreditation makes little difference to institutions; they can remain in business with, or without, accreditation.
--Accreditation makes little difference to graduates; reciprocity agreements are not honored.
--Accreditation of teacher education programs has little effect on improving the quality of K-12 education.
--Costs are too high for institutions in comparison with the benefits received.
--Too many institutions must be visited; the size of the task taxes available resources.
--Institutions already belonging to accrediting bodies attempt to impose their standards on those seeking admission.
--Decisions are based on politics rather than on merit.
--Vocational goals rather than intellectual or liberal education goals are emphasized.
--NCATE acknowledges only one curriculum model for

teacher education.
--Values are imposed on institutions.
--NCATE places certain types of institutions at a disadvantage while giving favored treatment to other types.
--Strong and/or weak programs are masked by overall evaluations.
--The process fails to differentiate between initial accreditation and reaccreditation.
--Standards are undesirably vague.
--Standards do not focus on factors reflecting high quality programs.
--Standards are not based on empirical evidence and their validity has not been established.
--Although standards are supposedly equal, they receive differentiated weight in practice.
--Standards are arbitrary, inconsistent, and redundant.
--"Rubber" standards are used.
--The accreditation process is not adequately related to the standards.
--Excellence is ignored at the expense of meeting minimum standards of quality.
--Standards are "process" rather than "product" oriented.
--Visiting teams are too large.
--Visiting teams vary greatly in terms of quality.
--Visiting team membership include students and practitioners without the expertise to make the judgments required.
--Visiting teams are inadequately trained and prepared to accomplish their assignment; they must rely on volunteers.
--Visiting teams are "wined and dined."
--NCATE would put itself out of business financially if it disapproved too many institutions.
--NCATE leadership and staff quality are uneven.
--Institutions seeking accreditation are not pre-screened.

Some of the above concerns may be valid; others may be based more on myth than fact (Moore, 1982); some may be true of accrediting bodies in general and not just of NCATE (Gardner, 1982); others may have been true at one time, but may now no longer be true (R. C. Kunkel, personal communication, December 12, 1985). There is no intent here to dwell on the weakness of NCATE, but only to acknowledge

that NCATE has been the recipient of criticism in the past and to describe the nature of that criticism. There would be little accomplished by "reiterating the same time-worn cliches of criticisms of NCATE...or by re-grinding the old problems" (R. C. Kunkel, personal communication, December 12, 1985). The recent study commissioned by NCATE and conducted by the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) of Michigan State University (Wheeler, 1980a, 1980b) summarizes many of the current strengths and weaknesses of NCATE. In addition, it provides suggestions for changes in procedures and for improving access to external levels of power:

Strengths

1. Present practice generally uncovers major problems in a program of professional education.
2. NCATE regulates some of the worst programs of professional education. Programs denied accreditation suffer from numerous serious problems that run the gamut of NCATE's Standards. NCATE denial represents a clear signal to the public that a program is inferior (as judged by NCATE Standards).
3. The NCATE accreditation process is carried out in a professional manner in that participants take their responsibilities seriously and seek to apply the Standards in an objective way.
4. Institutions observed for this study whose programs were accredited by the Council generally benefited from the process in that they attempted to modify some part of their programs in response to NCATE concerns.
5. Denial of accreditation has led to some modifications in programs, according to a random sample of institutions with one or more programs denied accreditation between 1974 and 1978 (Wheeler, 1980b, p. 4).

Weaknesses

1. Vagueness in NCATE's Standards and their general organization impede attempts to judge program quality.

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2. Explanatory materials developed by NCATE neither define key terms nor suggest what evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that Standards have been met.
3. Training sessions for prospective team members and team chairpersons provide only a cursory discussion of the standards.
4. Work conditions constrain the ability of NCATE participants to evaluate program compliance. Among those conditions are a lack of time and people and a large number of programs to be evaluated.
5. Inappropriate institutional influence over composition of evaluation teams, information available to Visiting Teams and the Council, and future participation of team members affects the ability of the Council to evaluate fully program compliance with NCATE standards.
6. Certain dynamics in team visits and Council meetings virtually preclude a thorough and complete examination of programs. Among those dynamics are participation of team members who lack training, in violation of NCATE's operating policy; participation by state agency observers as regular team members, in violation of NCATE's official policy; limited team member use of NCATE manuals in gathering data; emphasis on a presence-or-absence approach by most team chairpersons; and confusion over specific procedures to be followed during the team visits by team chairpersons. Council consideration of program performance is constrained by role definitions that discourage attempts to go beyond information presented in Visiting Team Reports and by a lack of time (Wheeler, 1980b, p. 6).

Suggested Changes in Procedures

(1) changes in the format of the Standards; (2) development of a policy manual that provides a rationale for each Standard, shows how Standards are related to one another, and provides examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices drawn from Visiting Team Reports and Council decisions; (3) development of a second, more demanding, set of Standards to provide an incentive for additional institutions that feel they have truly outstanding programs to seek NCATE accreditation; (4) creation of a system for screening Institutional Reports and Visiting Team Reports to reduce the incidence of incomplete reports; (5) revision of evaluation procedures to encourage

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in-depth penetration by team members; (6) modification of training sessions to promote greater understanding of all requirements; (7) changes in present Visiting Team procedures to promote more efficient use of time; and (8) consideration of increasing the size of teams and extending the team visit by one day (Wheeler, 1980b, pp. 10-11).

Suggested Changes in Improving Access to External Levels of Power

(1) make the public more aware of its accreditation decisions by expanding its dissemination activities; (2) improve relationships with certain State Departments of Education; (3) develop a link between eligibility for federal funds and accreditation by a recognized program-accrediting agency; (4) increase the number of school districts that require applicants for employment to be graduates of NCATE-accredited schools; and (5) develop alternative sources of funding for its accrediting activities to reduce dependence on institutions (Wheeler, 1980b, p. 11).

Recent Efforts at Strengthening NCATE

As Wooley (1981), a critic of NCATE, has said, "[I]t...seems clear that if NCATE follows the recommendations of the IRT study at Michigan State University, having NCATE program accreditation in the future may be very important to an institution" (p. 38). In November, 1981 the President of AACTE appointed a Committee on Accreditation Alternatives (CAA). Its charge was "to develop an alternative accreditation `designed to' overcome the deficiencies of the existing system" (Scannell, 1983, p. 2). In addition to developing the committee's report, activities included the previously cited IRT study and preparing NCATE staff documents and position papers. The efforts involved many groups (e.g., Association of State

Universities and Land Grant Deans, The Teacher Education Council of State Universities, Council on Learned Societies, The Council of Chief State School Officers) and individuals, including volunteers from state, regional, land grant, private and large research oriented institutions (Kunkel, 1984). Hearings were held throughout the country. Recommendations were consolidated and reviewed over a period of more than two years. The goals "were to organize NCATE more effectively, finance the organization to be less dependent on the fortunes of its constituents and manage the Council in a more effective fashion" (Scannell, 1983, p. 5). From the efforts came six tenets upon which a redesign of NCATE was predicated:

1. Unit-focused standards;
2. A Board of Examiners of more highly trained personnel in smaller groups;
3. Continued accreditation replacing regular accreditation;
4. Data-driven evaluations;
5. Better articulation between state and national accreditation; and
6. An expanded Annual List that contains more descriptive data that can be used qualitatively to make judgements about institutions (R.C. Kunkel, personal communication, December 12, 1985; see also Kunkel, 1984, p. 8; Kunkel, 1985, p. 3-4; Lilly, 1983, p. 222; Scannell, 1983, p. 2).

Nevertheless, as Richard Kunkel, the executive director of NCATE has written, "The redesign of NCATE is not any one of these [six tenets] alone, and is not in any way complete" (R.C. Kunkel, personal communication, December 12, 1985). NCATE's recent efforts have resulted in a new set of standards that:

--call for testing to monitor the level of basic communication skills of teacher education students;
--require documentation of students' competencies and skills on completion of a teacher education program;
--hold the college or university responsible for following its teacher education graduates into their first year of teaching;
--require the teacher education unit to engage practicing teachers to assist in developing the institution's teacher education curriculum and to serve as policy advisors;
--view the total university as responsible for setting the tone and providing the support for a teacher education program of the highest quality;
--require that current research about effective teaching be incorporated into the education courses offered;
--require that teacher education students have a strong background in liberal arts and general studies;
--require rigorous academic studies in the subject in which a student will be certified to teach;
--require a minimum of 10 weeks of student teaching; and
--establish a ratio of faculty to students for clinical and field-based teaching experiences (Kunkel, 1985).

Many of the reactions to these recent efforts of NCATE have been positive: "This revolutionary teacher education accreditation program should put to rest the quick-fix and politically expedient proposals of some teacher education critics..."--Mary Hatwood Futrell, President of NEA (Carroll, 1985). "Today we begin a new quest for quality teacher education"--Robert L. Saunders, President of AACTE (Teacher accrediting, 1985).

But not all of the reactions have been in favor of NCATE's actions. In an editorial of the Washington Times, it is stated "But NCATE is the very accreditation agency

that has presided over the debacle of present-day teacher training..." (Gardner, E.M., 1985).

It is difficult to know if the recent establishment of the Holmes Group, an association of "prestigious, research oriented institutions" (Jacobson, 1985; Lanier, 1985), stems from a reaction against the efforts of NCATE or a desire to provide much-needed leadership in teacher education. At the very least, it may be a manifestation of impatience for bringing about perceived required changes for the improvement of teacher education. Many of the individuals participating in the Holmes Group have also been active in the recent attempts to improve NCATE (Gubser, 1983; Jacobson, 1985). The Holmes Group, itself, has come under attack for being elitist, simplistic, and indecisive (Holmes Group's "insularity...," 1982). The Holmes Group has identified the following "ingredients" as necessary for "implementing" higher standards for teaching and teacher education:

1. We must change the preparation patterns and occupational structures of teaching so that highly competent people see it as a worthy investment either for a brief period of national service or for the long-term as a professional career.
2. We must change the entrance standards for teaching so that only college graduates with established records of strong academic ability and successful records of apprenticeship with selected teachers and professors are allowed to teach in our schools.
3. We must change the selection process for teaching so that talented college graduates with very modest preparation in education can work for one to three years as national service teachers; i.e. provided they have sound technical training in the summers, and

quality guidance and oversight from professional teachers throughout the school year. (Note: Such an approach would be modeled after our nation's successful Peace Corps and ROTC programs.)

4. We must change the selection process and role expectations for those who would pursue teaching as a career so that only those with outstanding qualifications would fill the ranks of professional career teachers; i.e., those persons willing and able to do the following:
   -- successfully pursue an in-depth course of study for professional preparation.
   -- pass rigorous examinations that evidence mastery of the required knowledge and skill.
   -- demonstrate four consecutive years of teaching that is evaluated regularly and judged consistently to be of truly outstanding quality, and
   -- assume responsibility for helping schools be more effective through professional work with adults as well as with children.
5. We must then change the reward structure for these professional career teachers so that extrinsic, as well as the intrinsic returns for the work are comparable to that of other respected professions.
6. We must change the working relationships, roles, and responsibilities within and between schools and universities so that their collaborative endeavors can assure the public of well-educated teachers for America's older children (Lanier, 1985, pp. 3-4).

There is no desire on the authors'/presenters' part to be negative or critical of those sincerely attempting to provide leadership and improve teacher education. Nevertheless, the new standards still use terms that may be considered to be vague, e.g., comprehensive, acceptable, relevant, systematic, sufficient, and necessary. The use of such words may be because of the nature of such statements. The medical profession recognizes the difficulty in writing

precise standards. In the Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs it is admitted:

> These standards are sometimes stated in a fashion that is not susceptible to quantification or to precise definition because the nature of the evaluations is qualitative in character and can be accomplished only by the exercise of professional judgement by qualified persons (Liaison Committee on Medical Education, 1985, p. 6).

On the other hand, the words of Mertens and Yarger (1982) are brought to mind,

> The only difficulty we have in getting excited about the current compelling proposals for strengthening teacher education is that we, as teacher educators, know we have been at this junction many times before" (p. 9)....
>
> This paper has made a case that teacher education has been stuck in déja vu, but--
> 1. Not because teacher training has not received public attention and scrutiny...
> 2. Not because there is no vision of what professional teacher training should and could look like. Strengthening teacher education has not been stymied by a lack of powerful ideas.
> 3. Not because there are no standards for entry into the profession. On the contrary, standards exist but they have been compromised at so many points they have little public credibility (p. 11).

And the words of Stiles:

> The most predictable characteristic about the art of teacher education is that whatever exists today will be challenged tomorrow...it is a carrousel of conflict that returns again and again to the same issues and the same arguments as well as to many of the same proposed solutions" (1971, p. 388).

Many people have worked diligently to improve teacher education and the accreditation of programs which are preparing teachers. They take pride in their efforts. As Doren Christensen (1985), the former deputy executive

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secretary of NCATE has said, "Many such persons [who worked on NCATE previously] are justifiably proud of the current system and its effectiveness and are afraid that the new proposals will weaken NCATE" (p. 21). And in respect to the present NCATE standards, he has written, "The current standards have been highly regarded as effective in promoting change for improvement by the many institutions who have submitted themselves to their application. They have been reviewed by external agencies and have been found to be of high quality" (p. 20).

Imig, the executive director of AACTE has said that recent "Progress [in revising NCATE's standards and procedures] has been made despite public criticism, lack of resources, and lack of support among our university colleges" (Saunders, 1985).

Speaking of the contribution of AACTE, Saunders (1985) has written,

> In summary, strong evidence suggests that AACTE has been a leader in the effort to improve teacher education. The Association has worked in moving toward a system of national certification in strengthening national accreditation (including plans for use of NCATE by state boards of education and state departments of education in program approval and in teacher certification) in assisting efforts by a significant number of its member institutions to improve their existing four-year models, and in advocating extended programs (no page number).

Judith Lanier, one of the founders of the Holmes Group, seems to take pride in the fact that "This effort [the establishment of the Holmes Group] began in late 1982, prior to the release of A Nation at Risk" (Lanier, 1985).

It is probably true that, even if NCATE and teacher education had perfect accreditation standards, ideal processes, and decision makers with all-encompassing wisdom, criticism of NCATE and teacher education would still exist. The question remains, "Where do we go from here?" Let's hope that the answer is not the same answer given to one of the authors/presenters when he asked for directions in a small, mountain town, "You can't get there from here."

Wheeler (1980a, 1980b) grouped his suggestions for improving NCATE into two broad categories--"changes in procedures" and "changes in improving access to external levels of power." Although some of what is said in the remaining part of this paper/presentation may have implications for "procedures," the primary focus will be on the issues related to "power." It is the thinking of the authors/presenters that the answer to the question of "How do we get there from here?" may be in how "power" is perceived and used.

NCATE and Power

The dictionary's definition of power is "possession of control, authority, or influence over others." It also defines power as the "ability to act or produce an effect." Both definitions would seem to pertain to NCATE. It is necessary to "possess control, authority or influence over others" in order to have the "ability to act or produce an effect." Power is related to NCATE in two respects: first in respect to the external power that NCATE has over others;

and second, to the power that is used internally in NCATE in order to control or influence what NCATE does. The various aspects of NCATE's power have been well recognized in the literature:

In respect to NCATE's power:

> NCATE's power base, professional authority, proves weaker than the economic or legal authority exercised by other "levers of power" that affect programs of professional preparation (e.g. legislative action,...regulatory powers of State Departments of Education... (Wheeler, 1980b, pp. 7-8).

In respect to the importance of considering the issue of power as related to NCATE:

> The point to be made clear here is that the criticisms are not centered on the basic issue of the politics of accreditation and that myths created by such off-base claims can obscure the truth and obstruct the progress of evaluation--accreditation--efforts (Moore, 1982, pp. 28-29).

In respect to the need for recognizing issues related to both external and internal uses of power:

> Changes that can be effected within NCATE receive attention; alternatives requiring related changes in agencies and approaches outside NCATE may be alluded to but receive little consideration, regardless of their merits (Scannell, 1983, p. 15).

The external power of NCATE has been compared with the power of accrediting bodies for other professions like law and medicine (W.E. Gardner and Palmer). In most states, a prospective lawyer or physician cannot "sit" for a state licensure examination without first completing a program of studies at an institution accredited by the professional body. In this way, the law and medical professions control

those who are permitted to practice. This is not the case for the teaching profession. Thus, NCATE's power has been generally limited to the use of persuasion to improve teacher education programs; and its power to regulate programs has been limited. The reasons for limiting the power of NCATE are many. The public, to date, has not trusted the teaching profession, preferring instead to keep decisions regarding who can teach in the hands of the state. Teachers, unlike lawyers and physicians, generally have less formal education than the professors that prepare them. institutions seeking accreditation for their teacher education must stand the brunt of the accreditation costs. On the other hand, institutions seeking accreditation for their medical programs, after initial accreditation, are not charged for the process of accreditation and expenses for visiting teams are reimbursed (Liaison Committee on Medical Education, 1985, p. 5). Only until fairly recently has the National Education Association (NEA) taken an active interest in accreditation, preferring to focus their attention on other issues (Gardner, W.E. & Palmer, 1982; Stiles, undated; Robbins, 1978; Toch, 1983); and the American Federation of teachers has not participated in NCATE although it is expressing an interest in doing so now (Rodman, 1985).

NCATE's effectiveness has also been limited by power struggles within its organization and by debates as to whom has the ability to pay for its operation. At first it was

the Deans and professors of education who controlled accreditation (Stiles, undated; Robbins, 1978). Now many groups have an interest in what NCATE does--practitioners, education professors, subject material specialists, state departments of education, chief state school officers, school boards--to name just a few. As Howsam, Corrigan, Denemark and Nash (1976) have written, "Because teacher education covers such a range of disciplines, subject fields, and related specialities, it is difficult to identify the appropriate professional bodies to serve on the governing and policy boards of accrediting agencies" (p. 123). And as Cyphert has said, "The focus is on self-interest control of accreditation...This emphasis on the political and the parochial is...a condition in which numbers rather than knowledge, and power rather than expertise, are the basis on which decisions are made" (Robbins, 1978, pp. 20-21).

Recent efforts in the governance of NCATE have attempted to deal with the multitude of competing interests. NCATE's new constitution has made an effort to accommodate various groups within its structure. Whether or not NCATE has been successful in this regard is still open to question. The future strength of NCATE rests on the answer.

As suggested above, competing with NCATE for control over teacher education programs have been state governments (Coley, 1985; Gardner, W.E. & Palmer, 1982; Hermanowicz, 1978; Moore, 1982; Robbins, 1978). In this sense, the

teaching profession has taken on a "civil" service dimension.

> Far more than for other professions requiring state licensing, state control of certification in professional education has taken on what could be called a "civil service" dimension rather than a "professional" dimension. In other fields the profession is responsible for establishing and monitoring preparation standards. Typically for other professions the colleges have the responsibility of developing training programs, and a board or boards of the profession review and accredit programs, screen candidates, and enforce standards. While these conditions now exist to a limited degree in a few states, generally the certification procedure for education is different than for fields such as medicine, law and pharmacy.
>
> Professional licensure usually signifies that an individual is qualified to practice in a broad category of activities identified by such terms as "architecture" or "dentistry." But certification in education does not qualify one to teach--just to teach a certain subject or subjects to students of certain ages. It falls short of being a badge of membership in a profession. In addition, in most states the agency in charge of the certification process isn't responsible to the profession. State legislatures really are in control of teacher certification although a state department of public instruction may be the agent that carries out the legislative mandates. Acts of legislation, once in place, are very difficult to remove or change.
>
> As a consequence of these factors, we believe that certification in professional education is more akin to the civil service system than it is to professional licensure. It is designed to establish and maintain standards for preparation and employment of public school personnel, not to screen candidates for admission to a profession (Gardner, W. E. & Palmer, 1982, pp. 18-19).

Yet, state agencies seldom have the resources to accomplish the accreditation task required of them (Roth, 1983). The political pressures are too great for them to disapprove marginal programs. As a result, they can do

little more than "harass" institutions to improve (Christensen, 1985) and few programs are ever denied approval (Toch, 1983). Furthermore, the state program process and standards are often so similar to those of NCATE that they appear to be duplicative (Behling, 1984; Gardner, W.E. & Palmer, 1982; Scannell, 1983). Nevertheless, the two types of reviews can, and probably should exist; but they should serve different purposes (Gardner, W.E., 1982; Gardner, W.E. & Palmer, 1982). For these reasons, NCATE is working with organizations representing state agencies by having NCATE focus upon institutional characteristics and leaving the specifics of program approval to the states. In this way, NCATE is attempting to contribute to the overall effort by using nationally established standards (Scannell, 1983) and by "'taking the heat' for decisive action in curtailing ineffective and inefficient preparation programs" (Wheeler, 1980b, p. 2). The new NCATE constitution proposes that NCATE should "Develop and recommend...standards and procedures to recognize states with program approval systems that meet national standards of quality" (Constitution, 1985).

NCATE will probably fail to exert as much power as it should as long as its imposition remains voluntary (Christensen, 1980; Gardner, W.E. & Palmer, 1982; Moore, 1982; Stiles, undated; Watts, 1983). Although NCATE accreditation is mandatory in a practical sense for many institutions (Moore, 1982; Olsen, 1979), the fact that many

institutions, large and small, prestigious and not-so-prestigious, can function and remain prosperous without NCATE accreditation will only maintain the present position of NCATE as a "toothless" tiger. NCATE's muscle can only be developed through use. At the present time, NCATE can only recommend and suggest, but not require improvements (Roth, 1983). Making NCATE accreditation mandatory, using procedures similar to those enforced by the accrediting agencies for law and medicine, would probably put some teacher education programs out of business. On the other hand, without making NCATE accreditation mandatory, it will be difficult for NCATE to enforce its standards related to the knowledge base of education and, thus, to have much impact on the K-12 schools of this nation. However, the willingness for the public, practitioners, and teacher educators to make NCATE mandatory will come about only when it is perceived that NCATE functions fairly, credibly and effectively.

Although statements to the contrary have been made, and there may be little precise empirical evidence to support the opposite point of view (NCATE Redesign, 1985; Rodman, 1985; Scannell, 1983; Tom, 1983), there is still the contention that NCATE's policies and procedures discriminate against certain types of institutions. As long as there is this possibility, or even the appearance of it, NCATE will probably never receive the support it must have.

It would be relatively easy for NCATE to modify its procedures so there would be little doubt as to its fairness. For instance, it would be possible for them to use the procedures which are used by refereed journals to ensure fairness where blind reviews, or nearly blind reviews, are used. Of course, visiting teams cannot be blind, but their reports can be. Institutional Reports could also be written so the identity of the institution is masked. A series of steps for the audit and review committees could be devised so that, at least at certain stages, recommendations about accreditation could be made without the identities of the institutions under review being known by the evaluators. Some of the standards may have to be rewritten so that certain information about institutions, although helpful (but not essential) to evaluators, would be eliminated from reports, e.g. information about the use of graduate assistants (more about this later) and descriptions of programs outside the purview of NCATE. Percentages could be used rather than numbers, as long as assurances of minimums are maintained. Likewise, NCATE could specify representation of various types of institutions of higher education on its policy making bodies and committees as it currently does for various interest groups (e.g. practicing teachers) and other professional organizations. If these suggestions were followed, the effect would be worth the effort and the credibility of NCATE would be enhanced.

A Proposed Seventh Tenet

As indicated previously in this paper/presentation, NCATE has developed six tenets around which its present efforts at redesign have been focused. One of the basic tenets of this paper/presentation is that in order for NCATE to gain power, certain groups within NCATE will have to give up power. To test this tenet, the authors have attempted to seek answer to a rather simple (some may think simplistic) question. Actually they have asked themselves a series of questions, with the various questions being a basic question asked in different contexts. The basic question is "What can X do, or do best, that others cannot do, or do as well, as related to the accreditation/certification/license issues?" This question implies another, "What can X not do, or not do as well as others?" For example, "What can NCATE do and not do that others can do or do do better?" "What can higher education do and not do that others can do or do do better?" "What can K-12 schools do and not do that others can do or do do better?" "What can research oriented departments/schools/colleges of education do and not do that others can do or do do better?" "What can state agencies do and not do that others can do or do do better?" Obviously, other observers have asked these and similar questions and the authors by themselves cannot hope to answer the questions fully. Nevertheless, the authors/presenters believe that asking these questions may help in focusing discussion about NCATE and accreditation. The answers may

produce some surprising, perhaps startling, results. As has been noted in this presentation/paper and elsewhere (Mertens & Yarger, 1982), in spite of an endless series of sound recommendations, little progress has been made in implementing recommendations for improving teacher education. Perhaps too many individuals and groups have been attempting to tell others what they should be doing without focusing on what they could or should be doing themselves. As Moore (1982) has said "Redefining the roles of state, federal, and private agencies in accreditation is believed to be a means by which to make accreditation more efficient" (p. 40).

Let us begin with NCATE. "What can NCATE do that others cannot do? What can NCATE not do?" The answer to the first question is obvious--accreditate. The answer to the second question is not so obvious. As Watts (1983) has written, "The central issue in the controversy surrounding NCATE seems to be a lack of consensus concerning its proper role in teacher education" (p. 646).

It is helpful to examine what the accrediting body for the medical profession says about its function. The opening sentence of the statement on accreditation of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) (1985) states, "The process of accreditation is designed to determine the achievement and to certify the maintenance of minimum standards of education..." (p. 5). The document goes on to

say, "The primary responsibility of the LCME is to attest to the educational quality of accredited programs..." (p. 5).

It continues,

> The curriculum of the program leading to the M.D. degree must be designed to provide a general professional education, recognizing that, this alone, is insufficient to prepare a graduate for independent, unsupervised practice (p. 13).
>
> The varied measures [of evaluation of student achievement] utilized should determine whether or not students have attained the school's standards of performance, as well as national standards of performance, as measured by licensing examinations, accepted into residency programs, and emerging measures which may prove to be valid (p. 14) (Emphasis ours).

Conspicuously omitted from the LCME statement are grandiose claims for maintaining high quality health care for the public and improving the quality of life for the American people or even ensuring that medical doctors will be well prepared. In essence, it simply says that accredited programs should (not must) help graduates to be ready to take the licensing examination. In all fairness to NCATE, it, too, makes similar limiting statements. For example, NCATE's new constitution states "the primary purpose of NCATE will be the accreditation of education units...that prepares K-12 professional educators." And as Stedman (1980) states:

> There can be no guarantee that all graduates of accredited programs are well prepared and qualified to enter a profession, but accreditation does provide reasonable assurance that certain standards have been met and the programs evaluated have been judged by professional personnel to have satisfied minimum expectations (p. 10).

What is obvious from the previously cited benefits attributed to NCATE is that unrealistic expectations for NCATE have been postutated. Statements in the standards would seem to support such intentions. For example, "The professional education unit develops and maintains positive working relationships with local schools...to improve the delivery of quality education in schools" (NCATE Redesign, 1985, p. 20).

What can NCATE do? It can develop program standards and compare those standards with programs being evaluated. What can NCATE not do? It can be expected to do no more than what the medical profession expects from its accreditation body--to accredit programs that will help to prepare graduates to stand for an objective, licensing examination.

"What can higher education do?" Teach the knowledge base of education. It can do no more. It cannot ensure good K-12 schools. It cannot ensure good teachers or tell teachers what they ought to do. As Coley (1985) has written,

> One must draw a parallel with other professions and be aware that, just as satisfactory completion of medical or law school does not automatically admit individuals to the practice of these professions, neither does satisfactory completion of a teacher education program always automatically provide certification. [E]ducational assessment [should focus]...on the types of learning situations to which an individual is exposed and on the time spent in these situations, rather than on what the individual actually learned (pp. 6-7).

Teaching the knowledge base is enough of a mission for higher education. "[S]chools, colleges, and departments of education are the best-prepared agency and are in the best position to provide this knowledge base for aspiring teachers" (Saunders, 1985). "Teacher education [should] become a genuine professional school on the college or university campus and, from that base, serve as the preparation and development arm of the teaching profession" (Howsam, 1982, p. 2).

NCATE should review its new standards and modify such statements as, "[Programs should require] evaluations of students' abilities to apply the knowledge base under actual conditions of professional practice" (NCATE Redesign, 1985, p. 17).

The research oriented institutions have a special responsibility. Of course, by definition, they should be leaders in conducting research to add to the knowledge base that has significance to K-12 schools. They should also make clear to the public and practitioners what research can and cannot do. They should summarize and interpret research findings for use, and participate in the preparation of tests over the knowledge base of education. If the Holmes Group had limited its efforts to such endeavors, instead of attempting to influence others in areas seemingly outside their own areas of expertise, their efforts may have been better received. The group may have been able to make a substantial contribution to the education of teachers.

"What can state agencies do in issues related to accreditation, in addition to working with NCATE and approving specific programs and licensing educational professionals?" They should encourage an environment in the K-12 schools that is conducive to the use of the knowledge base in education. "What should state agencies not do?" They should not attempt to regulate teacher education programs to the degree that higher education is unable to use its specialized expertise in teaching the knowledge base of education (Denemark, 1985; W.E. Gardner, 1982). It is inappropriate to hold higher education responsible for accomplishing its mission and then require them to follow specified procedures that must be used to achieve those ends.

The K-12 schools, in addition to using the knowledge base of education in teaching children and youth, should assume more responsibility than they have in the past for clinical training (Stiles, 1969, 1973; Parkay, 1986). Just as the medical profession, as cited above, does not expect medical schools to prepare fully accomplished physicians, neither should it be assumed that colleges and universities can prepare fully accomplished teachers, especially in respect to how teachers make practical use of the knowledge base of education. As is generally known, departments/schools/colleges of education have little control over what transpires in schools and the experiences of their student teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Griffin,

Barnes, Hughes, O'Neil, Defino, Edwards & Hukill, 1983; Howey, 1977; Liphe, 1979; McCaleb, 1979; Sears, 1984; O'Hanlen, 1976).

Teacher organizations should be fully supportive of NCATE efforts. They should be at the forefront of encouraging the expansion and use of the knowledge base of education and should be more sophisticated about what research and various types of institutions of higher education are able and not able to do. They should encourage the concept that practicing teachers should assume the responsibility for the practical training of teachers.

Finally, the federal government and philanthropic foundations also have responsibility to ensure the improvement of teacher education programs. Nevertheless, delimiting their responsibilities and those of other related organizations will be left to others to describe.

A Concluding Statement

This paper/presentation has attempted to describe the circumstances surrounding NCATE at the present time and the location and functioning of power in the accrediting process. Our thesis has been that, in addition to what else NCATE has done and is attempting to do, NCATE will not fulfill its mission unless its external power, and the power-struggle internal to NCATE, is understood and harnessed. It seems ironic to the authors/presenters that, although AACTE is a major force within NCATE, AACTE does not require NCATE accreditation of its member institutions. It

also seems ironic that so little is said by NCATE accredited institutions about requiring graduation from NCATE accredited undergraduate programs as a prerequisite for admission to graduate programs. Clearly, numerous measures could be taken to enhance the power of and, thus, NCATE's effectiveness.

Some readers (members of the audience) may take exception to a basic belief held by the authors (presenters) of this paper (presentation). This basic belief is that there exists today, on the part of many teachers and teacher educators, including some members of AACTE and some actively involved in NCATE, a negative, almost anti-intellectual, anti-academic, anti-research, anti-theory attitude toward teacher education. This bias is manifested in a number of ways.

First is the reluctance on the part of teachers and teacher educators to use standardized tests to evaluate an individual's knowledge. We say there is a knowledge base for teacher education like that in law and medicine. This knowledge base, if it is available as we claim it is, can be organized, taught to students, and its learning tested for objectively. We say we can do this, at least in part, in our teacher education courses. It should be no more difficult to test for it by using standardized tests than it is for law and medicine to test for the learning of their knowledge base. Law and medicine do not claim that the possession of their knowledge base, and the testing for it,

is sufficient--but only that it is necessary. We should do the same for teaching.

A second manifestation of this negative attitude we believe is that NCATE has a bias against research oriented institutions. Many NCATE supporters would strongly disagree with this belief. Although many may not admit it, we believe it still exists. For example, some readers (listeners) may object to the proposal made earlier in this paper (presentation) that, in order to ensure "blind" reviews, NCATE should change its practices and develop procedures to mask an institution's use of graduate assistants for teaching, which many research oriented institutions do. If individuals have the basic qualifications to teach it should not matter if they are graduate assistants or are regular members of the faculty. Nevertheless, the NCATE standards imply that graduate assistants are less than qualified. On the other hand, many graduate assistants in doctoral programs have been regular faculty members of other institutions and have returned to school to further their education. They are no less qualified as college instructors because they have become graduate assistants than they were as regular faculty members.

Another example of NCATE's negative bias against research oriented institutions is reflected in the new NCATE stipulation requiring that no undergraduate faculty member should teach more than 12 hours and no graduate faculty

member should teach more than 9 hours. The requirement is well intended and is sound in certain respects. It certainly has an appeal to faculty. Nevertheless, resources are allocated, not on the basis of number of courses taught, but on number of student hours included in FTE generated.

Competition for resources exists at all institutions, regardless of size. Nevertheless, at large, complex institutions, deans of education must compete for resources with law, medicine, and other "favored" programs. Unlike their counterparts at small colleges and universities, they are more likely to have only a few minutes a year to state their case for resources with their president (if they see him/her at all) and the vice presidents for academic affairs. Whereas at small schools, deans of education are more likely to have more frequent contacts. In short, the new NCATE 12/9 hour teaching load requirement for faculty would affect all deans of education, but without connecting that requirement in some way to FTEs, it is more likely to create problems for a dean at a large institution then for a dean at a small one. NCATE seems insensitive to such problems. It represents an example of how NCATE is biased against larger, research oriented institutions. Other examples could be cited.

This paper/presentation has attempted to describe the circumstances in which NCATE finds itself today and to present some insights as to how NCATE could become more effective. There is much to be done. The writers/

presenters believe the effort to strengthen NCATE is worth the effort.

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